



FOREIGN POLICY BULLETIN

An interpretation of current international events by the Research Staff of the Foreign Policy Association

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION, Incorporated

22 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y.

VOL. XXIII, No. 15

JANUARY 28, 1944

POLISH ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR CONSULTATIVE MACHINERY

ALLIED advances toward Rome and Russia's successful northern drive should serve to place in proper perspective the regrettable bickering that has threatened to develop among the three great powers on whose united military and political action depends not only the liberation of Europe's conquered millions, but their own survival. As casualties mount—and of the three powers Russia has suffered infinitely greater loss of life than either Britain or the United States—and the possibility of inflicting defeat on the Germans appears less remote, it is only human that the three governments should reassess both the position in which their respective countries will be left at the close of hostilities in Europe, and the attitude each may take toward post-war Europe. It would be a tragedy, however, if through misunderstanding or blundering this process of reassessment should drive a wedge between Britain, the United States and Russia, and nullify the results of the Moscow and Teheran conferences.

RUSSIA'S TERRITORIAL OFFER FAIR. Nor can it be regarded as anything but a misfortune that the first test of the professions made at these conferences should have to be the Russo-Polish conflict over Eastern Poland, one of the most ancient and perplexing territorial conflicts on the continent. In the midst of the verbal scrimmage precipitated by this issue, it may be useful to review several points raised by the contestants. First of all, it should be said that Russia's proposal, as expressed in its January 11 declaration, to reconsider the Ribbentrop-Molotov frontier settlement of 1939 and to adopt the Curzon Line as the basis of negotiation with the Poles was a fair offer,* especially considering the fact that the Soviet government is at present in a position to dictate the terms of a settlement that might be far less advantageous for Poland. While

the Curzon Line would be unacceptable to extreme Polish nationalists, more liberal Poles have expressed in the past their readiness to see the sections of Eastern Poland inhabited mainly by White Russians and Ukrainians pass into the hands of Russia, leaving Poland with a more homogeneous population. The territorial issue, therefore, does not appear to be insoluble.

POSITION OF POLISH GOVERNMENT. What the Polish government in London finds objectionable—and here it is in a position to enlist sympathy both among British and Americans—is that the Kremlin's offer to negotiate about the boundary is coupled with denunciation of that government, and simultaneous praise for the work of the Union of Polish Patriots in Moscow. No one familiar with Poland's internal situation before the German invasion would contend that the Polish government as now constituted is unanimously favorable either to enlightened political and economic institutions or to wholehearted collaboration with Russia. It is, in fact, a coalition that includes representatives of practically every important group in pre-war Poland, with the exception of Nazi-minded elements on the Right and Communists on the Left. It is entirely conceivable that Peasant and Socialist party leaders in the Polish government would prefer to see reactionary elements eliminated from their ranks. Yet even they may justifiably feel that such changes should come as a result of their own decision or demands from the Polish underground, not of pressure on the part of Russia.

Moreover, it is by no means a foregone conclusion that mere elimination of reactionary elements would of itself satisfy Russia. Communist organs in the United States have denounced Socialists in the Polish government with as much vigor as reactionaries. It is understandable that Russia should want to see in Poland, after the war, a government friendly to its interests. The United States, too, prefers to have

*Vera Micheles Dean, "Russia Proposes Polish Border Settlement," *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, January 14, 1944.

friendly governments in the neighboring countries of Central and South America. But if the United States should try to force existing governments out of office, and meanwhile help to set up substitute régimes on its own territory, would some of our commentators who find Russia's arguments wholly convincing take the same view of this country's conduct? As a matter of fact the United States, within recent weeks, has set an example of the procedure that might be followed in a very similar situation. The coup d'état that took place in Bolivia on December 20 is regarded by the Washington Administration as the work of elements inimical to the United States and the United Nations. This country could have unilaterally refused to recognize the new Bolivian régime, thus exerting political and economic pressure on Bolivia. It has preferred, instead, to consult with the other countries of Central and Latin America concerning this matter. In consequence, its decision of January 24 to withhold recognition reflects the views of all states members of the Pan American Union, with the exception of Argentina, which has already granted recognition.

Some Americans have justified Russia's attitude toward the Poles by saying that, if Russia should be asked to abandon its claims to Eastern Poland, this would be tantamount to asking the United States to return California to Mexico. This argument does not carry much conviction. It is, of course, true that if we should go back into the mists of history few nations today have an incontrovertible legal right to all of their territory. But the point is that in many instances where controversies either once existed, or may eventually arise, they do not happen to exist today. The English no longer claim suzerainty over Normandy, nor do the Mexicans demand California. Where no conflict exists, it would be far-fetched, to say the least, to stir one up just for the sake of apt analogy. The point is that a controversy does exist between Russia and Poland both about Eastern Poland and about the composition of the Polish government in London, and the immediate problem is how this controversy can be adjusted with the least detriment to the relations of the United Nations.

WAR REVIVES PLANS FOR ARAB FEDERATION

The possibility of an Arab federation, reminiscent of T. E. Lawrence's endeavors in World War I, is forecast by the series of conferences recently held between Egypt and representatives of the Arab states in the Near East. The final meetings were concluded on January 13, 1944. Dispatches from North Africa also indicate the rise of a Moslem movement to unify Tunisia, Algeria and French Morocco in a Western Arab empire.

ARAB POST-WAR PLANS. Current discussions are concerned with a proposed committee to repre-

PROCEDURE AT ISSUE. Moscow alone can say whether it considers the controversy as strictly a matter between itself and Poland—or, even more strictly, between itself and the Union of Polish Patriots—or is willing to have Britain and the United States assist in the renewal of relations between Russia and the Polish government in London, as proposed by the Poles in their statement of January 14. The end result of a United Nations discussion of Eastern Poland might well prove no different from bilateral Russo-Polish negotiations—for the Curzon Line had been approved in 1919 by France, Britain and the United States as leaving within the boundaries of Poland populations regarded as ethnologically Polish. What is at stake, then, is not the actual settlement of the border conflict, but the procedure by which the settlement is reached. If the procedure should be the imposition by Russia, a great power, of its will upon a weaker neighbor—no matter how many difficulties that neighbor may have caused Russia in the past—then the hopes aroused by the Moscow and Teheran conferences will be snuffed out; and the small countries of Europe will have little to look forward to except transition from Hitler's brutal *diktat* to the possibly more benevolent, but nevertheless tangible, dictation of one or other of the great Allied powers.

If, on the other hand, as must be hoped, the procedure followed in this test case should be that of joint consultation—similar to United Nations consultations about Mediterranean affairs and Pan-American consultations in the Western Hemisphere—then the small countries could feel a considerable measure of assurance that their interests will not be arbitrarily disregarded in the post-war settlement. To make such assurance really effective it is essential that the United Nations should create, at the earliest possible opportunity, an international organization on the lines adumbrated by the Moscow accord. The existence of such an organization would hold out to all nations, including Russia, the hope that peace can be garnered from victory.

VERA MICHELES DEAN

sent the Arab world at the peace conference, and an Arab Congress may be held shortly for the purpose of organizing such a committee. Egypt and Iraq have played the leading part in the present conversations, the former acting as host to delegates from the various Arab states, while Iraq—the only Arab nation actually in a state of war with the Axis—has suggested that a committee now be appointed to represent the Arab world at the peace conference.

The great powers have shown increasing interest in this area. Russia's main supply route passes through

the Middle East, while Britain and the United States are jointly concerned in the administration of the Middle Eastern Supply Center. Anglo-American collaboration in this sphere was stressed in the report of James M. Landis, American Director of Economic Operations in the Middle East, made before the Truman Committee on January 17. Pointing out that Britain has maintained its dominant economic position in that region, Landis urged that changes be effected in the joint Anglo-American Middle Eastern set-up to assist and promote American trading interests.

BASIS OF ARAB UNITY. The Middle East, not unlike the Balkans, has been striving for political and economic union, but has been hitherto frustrated by frontier quarrels, minority problems, and religious differences. Arab unification, simple in theory, becomes extremely difficult to achieve once detailed problems are confronted. The Arab world has, at most, cultural unity, with a basic language and religion. Political aspirations have thus far moved in the direction of separatism, although the spirit of a larger Arab nationalism has been in evidence since the last war. This is particularly true in the North African area. Today, however, plans for Arab federation are concerned more exclusively with the Arab nations in the Near East. But even there the very ticklish problem of leadership presents itself, for every Arab ruler can lay claim to pre-eminence in any such political reorganization. The paramount problem of minorities is also an obstacle to any plan of unity. In this respect, the Jewish question dominates all others. With it is bound up the problem of the future of Palestine.

The economic and social backwardness of Arab society as a whole tends further to jeopardize hopes of unity. Striking cultural differences exist between the nomad populations and the settled farmers. The very marked divisions between the ruling elite and

the Arab communities at large also emphasizes the lack of cohesion among the Arab peoples. The Arab nations are historically countries of economic scarcity. The level of consumption is normally low, and the economic development of the area can only progress on the basis of united action. In a federation Syria and Iraq may become the food producing areas while Palestine could become the industrial center, drawing on the rich oil reserves of the region. In the future, regional irrigation projects as well as transportation development will necessitate closer cooperation. Today the war has produced serious economic dislocation and inflation in the Middle East, as elsewhere. While shortages, hoarding and profiteering appear as internal problems to each country, in reality each state is involved with its neighbor and with the great powers now at war.

GREAT POWERS AND ARAB WORLD. Temporarily at least, Allied interest in this region revolves about the Middle Eastern Supply Center.* The MESC has undertaken certain long-term readjustments, notably the rationalization of production in this area, which anticipate greater interdependence of the countries as a unit. This very valuable experience in economic cooperation may foster the goal of Arab unity.

The great powers are implicated in Middle Eastern affairs not only because of present economic and military problems. Britain has long had vital political and strategic interests in this area, as witnessed by its alliance with Egypt and its special relationship to Palestine. The British government has given no hint as to what attitude it will take regarding the Jewish question in the Near East; nor have any public promises or proposals been made thus far to the Arabs at large. It is generally assumed, however, that Britain is in favor of closer ties between the Arab states but, at the same time, will continue to protect the Jews in Palestine and other minorities.

Further negotiations for Arab federation will not rest on a sound basis until the British government and the other great powers make clear their post-war intentions in this area. The interest of the great powers may well prove decisive, Allied economic arrangements and the political organization ultimately agreed upon by the United Nations will play a determining part in plans for an Arab federation. The action taken toward political unity within the Arab world must be placed in this broader framework.

GRANT S. McCLELLAN

*See Howard P. Whidden, Jr., "MESC Holds Promise for Future of Middle East," *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, September 24, 1943.

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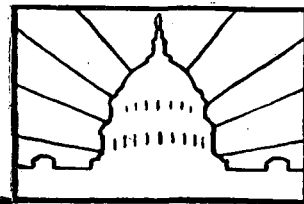
January 15 issue of FOREIGN POLICY REPORTS
REPORTS are published on the 1st and 15th of each month.
Subscription \$5; to F.P.A. members, \$3.

FOREIGN POLICY BULLETIN. Vol. XXIII, No. 15, JANUARY 28, 1944. Published weekly by the Foreign Policy Association, Incorporated. National Headquarters, 22 East 38th Street, New York 16, N. Y. FRANK ROSS MCCOY, *President*; DOROTHY F. LEE, *Secretary*; VERA MICHELES DEAN, *Editor*. Entered as second-class matter December 2, 1921, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Three Dollars a Year. Please allow at least one month for change of address on membership publications.

F. P. A. Membership (which includes the Bulletin), Five Dollars a Year

Produced under union conditions and composed and printed by union labor.

Washington News Letter



JAN. 24.—Public criticism of Spain by British and Russian spokesmen has left the Administration outwardly unmoved, but recent Spanish aid to Germany has shaken its confidence that the Allies have gained the upper hand in Spain. During the past week the State Department directed Ambassador Carlton Hayes in Madrid once more to make representations to the Spanish government concerning the continued presence of Spanish troops on the German side in Russia and the activities of Axis agents in Spain.

BRITISH AND RUSSIANS OUTSPOKEN. The Soviet Embassy *Bulletin* of January 13 attacked the Spanish government, declaring that Spanish troops were helping the Germans against the Red Army on a sector of the Volkhov front; a Spanish air squadron, regularly receiving replacements, was fighting on the eastern battle line; Spanish police had arrested persons distributing the press bulletins of the British Embassy in Madrid; and Spain was sending strategic materials to Germany. Amplifying the *Bulletin*, the Moscow radio on January 18 reported that General Franco's announcement that he had recalled Spain's "Blue Division" from the eastern front was "a downright lie and one that will deceive nobody."

On January 19 British Foreign Secretary Eden also publicly criticized the use of Spanish soldiers against Russia. He told the House of Commons that he had "informed the Spanish government through the Spanish Ambassador to London of the most serious effect which this continuing unneutral assistance to our enemies in this struggle against our allies must have on Anglo-Spanish relations now and in the future." British opinion had already been aroused against Spain by the explosion of a bomb in a ship carrying oranges from a Spanish port to England.

Further indications of Spanish assistance to Germany is given by the report that Berlin has agreed to liquidate the debt Spain incurred for German aid to Franco during the civil war, in return for a credit in Spain equivalent to 100,000,000 Reichsmarks, or about 400,000,000 pesetas. This move was a blow to the United States and Britain because it provides Germany with funds for the purchase of large quantities of wolfram, mercury and pyrites from Spain.

Spain depends on this country for many of its wartime imports, and this dependence affects its policy toward the United States. American policy toward Spain has had two main objectives: to prevent Germany from using Spain as a military base, and to keep the country's strategic materials out of

German hands. Spain's formal neutrality fulfills the first aim. The second aim had seemed more or less achieved until Germany concluded the debt arrangement with Madrid. The Nazis had been consistently short of pesetas, and Spain had refused to sell on credit. The United States and Britain, whose commercial companies in Madrid cooperate closely, have managed to keep between them a peseta balance large enough to meet their wartime needs. United States exports to Spain of oil and food—which have increased during the war years—have supplied us with pesetas.

U.S. GOVERNMENT NOT ALARMED. Despite recent diplomatic reverses, Washington does not consider the swing of Spanish policy toward Germany extensive enough to precipitate a crisis in our relations with Spain. General Franco's policy suggests that he hopes to preserve Spanish neutrality and, at the same time, perpetuate his régime. The first aim explains his tactics of trying to please now the Allies, now the Germans. The second aim is believed responsible for recent liberal gestures by the Franco government, whose dictatorial restrictions have caused increasing opposition on the part of the Spanish people.

At Christmas time the Spanish government freed 3,200 political prisoners. It has also reestablished the right of Spaniards to appeal to the courts from government decisions. Moreover, on December 20, at the first national congress of Falangist provincial secretaries, José Luis Arrese, Falangist secretary, announced that the government was relaxing restrictions on the press and was ordering the Falange Militia—the fascist-type soldiery—into the regular army. Any move curbing the Falange is well received in Washington and London because this group is a center of fascist, anti-democratic intrigue that has recently committed outrages against both the United States and Britain. In November Falangists broke into the British consulate at Saragossa. The Spanish government, first disclaiming responsibility, later apologized. On December 18 two members of the Falange broke into the American consulate in Valencia, tore pictures from the wall and made anti-American speeches to visitors at the consulate. Four days later the Spanish Foreign Ministry expressed regret to Ambassador Hayes for the Valencia incident, and José Luis Arrese apologized in the name of the Falange organization.

BLAIR BOLLES

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